

Stations for Creation

The practice of the Stations of the Cross offers a way of embodying the journey of Christ through the Passion. It is a way of remembering to ourselves the Cross as a bond of sacrificial love that unites all beings without doing away with their complexity and difference. The way to the Cross is a journey to an eclipsing fulfillment of love that secures us in this bond. The Stations are a way of going back into ourselves and tracking our many movements away from the promise of the Cross: the movements of fear that lead us to grasp false power and material advantage that comes at the expense of the wellbeing of not just other persons but all of creation. It is an opportunity to seek again our identity as lovers of all things in the image of God's love. Hopefully, the journey through these Stations will take us back into the knowledge of our covenant with the entire family of God's creation. While you are praying, set aside the priorities of the self and the stories it pushes: allow every tree, rock, weed, bee, gust of wind, patch of clay, or curious bird to teach us their own story of covenant. Each story offers a reflection and a prayer for the rediscovery of health in our relationships with our kin.

There is, additionally, a guided visualization practice for each Station. Please feel free to engage with this as much or as little as you like. Each practice will take you into the moments of the Passion narratives as they come, and ask you to bring them to life in your mind and body. These practices are a way to take part in the journey of Christ to his execution as if it were actually happening, and you were actually participating, and are a form of prayer that have been shared by Christians for millennia.

May God give us hope for healing. May we see the land of this farm itself as a special place for reimagining and rediscovering our relationships with all things.

The Stations of the Cross include a sensitive story regarding abuse of power and violence. Please be sensitive and tender with yourself.

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The First Station Jesus Before Pilate: The Dehumanization of Power

Opening Prayer

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

The earth is mourning, withering, the world is pining, withering, the heavens are pining away with the earth. The earth is defiled under its inhabitants' feet, for they have transgressed the law, violated the precept, broken the everlasting covenant. So, a curse consumes the earth and its inhabitants suffer the penalty.

— Isaiah 24: 4-6

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate. “You have said so,” Jesus replied.

— Mark 15: 1-2

Reflection

In Pilate's presentation of Christ, we are confronted by a familiarly callous dismissal and casual mockery from a place of business-like expediency. This is the mockery of every abuser – of the earth or of people or of any weaker beings – who speaks from the contentment of power. This is the callous dismissal of the vulnerable struggle for love that we are probably all so familiar with as one voice in ourselves – a voice that comes up when we are overwhelmed by the ills of the world and feel helpless to aid or connect with our neighbors. This is a world where we can be trained to feel hopeless, to allow our empathy to be eroded, and then be consumed by guilt for it. But the body of Christ is treasured. The body of the suffering lover is treasured and redeemed always. We are met in this story, and we may be met again and again in the stories of our life or the world, with one who wields power and yet has more concern for that power and the expediency of force than a suffering body. But Jesus shows us his answer: Jesus shows us the shape of his faith. Jesus hangs close to the curve of the world, close to the earth, close to those who hold him. The seal over the earth is insubstantial to the seed, the seed that will rise, the seed that in frailty clings to the soil.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene. The crowd... Pilate... The guards... The authorities... Christ and Barabbas... Take time to imagine the whole setting as vividly as

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possible, to *compose yourself, seeing the place*... What kind of a place is it? Clean or dirty? Large or small? Notice the architecture... Notice the weather...

Having prepared the stage, let the whole scene come to life now: see the people to whom Jesus is being presented... How many people are there?... What sort of people?... How are they dressed?... What are they doing?... What are they saying?... What does it feel like to be among them?...

Notice Pilate. How is he standing?... What is he wearing?... How does he look at the crowd?... How does he look at Jesus?... What are your feelings looking at him?...

Now let your gaze move to Jesus. Watch all his actions and movements... Where does he look?... What does his face say?... What do you think he is feeling?...

The moment is arriving... Pilate speaks to the people... What is the exchange?... What is the atmosphere?... Fill in the account of the gospel...

Dwell especially on the actions and words of Jesus... Listen to him... Feel the contrast of his presence with that of the crowd or of Pilate...

Jesus turns to you... You meet, eye to eye... What is in his eyes... What do you feel... See the world today, in the eyes of Christ... See your life in this world in his eyes... Where does this scene show up?... Where is Christ made vulnerable before power?... Where is love ignored for gain or comfort?... What does Christ do in these places in our world today?... What does Christ want you to do?... Are you really ready to take all the consequences of being a disciple?... You have arrived at a moment of faithful lament... What does it mean to love the world as he did?... Do you have the trust to follow where his love will take you?... Then watch as Christ is defeated and made low... Watch as he is subjected to cruelty and does not respond... What does it mean to respond to this scene today?

Spend a while now in quiet prayer in the weakness of Christ...

Prayer

God, Giver of all Life, make us remember the needs of the Earth. Show us again how to hear the voice of the soil. Give us the strength to risk transformation, make us new to our very core. Free us from the myopia of power. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Second Station

Jesus Takes Up the Cross: A Tree to Be Planted For the Future

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

They handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written: *The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for she has anointed me. She has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor.*

— Luke 4: 17-19

Pilate brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement. "Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, "Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked. "We have no king but caesar," the chief priests answered. Finally, Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull.

— John 19: 13, 14b, 15-17

Reflection

The Cross stands not only as the bearer of the sins of this world, but as the rising tree of the world yet to come: a world healed, a world made whole, a world where our yearnings move to God and God's yearnings move to us without faltering. The Cross is the point where time is consummated with the One Who enters it to make it new. Embrace the Cross as a tree to be planted in a primordial garden, facing the empty tomb and rising to its light. We will plant it with our own hands.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene. The crowd... Jesus... The Romans... The Jewish authorities... The street and the Cross... Take time to imagine the whole setting as vividly as possible, to *compose yourself, seeing the place...* What kind of a place is it? Clean or dirty? Large or small? How does the street feel under your feet? How does the air or sun feel on your skin? How does the air smell? Notice the architecture... Notice the weather...

Having prepared the stage, let the whole scene come to life now: see the movement of the crowd around Christ... How many people are there?... What sort of people?... What do they

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want?... Are they enjoying this?... What are they saying?... What does it feel like to be among them?...

Notice the Cross... How does it look?... What is it made of?... What does this image make you feel?...

Now let your gaze move to Jesus. Watch all his actions and movements... How does he move?... How do you feel seeing him in pain?... What does his face say?... What do you think he is thinking?...

The moment is arriving... Christ bends to receive the Cross... What is the atmosphere?... Fill in the account of the gospel with your vision...

Dwell especially on the feelings and actions of Jesus... Imagine his reality as one among many executed by the state in Jerusalem and across the world...

Does Jesus turn to you?... Do you meet, eye to eye?... What is in his eyes?... What do you feel?... Can you see the world today, as Christ is burdened with his Cross?... Can you see your weight on this Cross?... What does it mean for Jesus to bear it?...

Spend a while now in quiet prayer in the weakness of Christ...

Prayer

God of all Creation, change our hearts to make space for You. Give us eyes to see glimpses of You in all things, even where there is suffering and destruction. Be generous with Your creative Spirit. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Third Station Jesus Falls For the First Time

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

I brought you to a fertile country to enjoy its produce and good things; but no sooner had you entered than you defiled my land, and made my heritage detestable.

— Jeremiah 2:7

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

— Isaiah 53: 4-5

Reflection

Christ did not fall alone. His case was just one in the relentless machine of imperial control. He fell with others who were also to be slain that day. The power of Christ's fall is this: that Christ, falling beneath his cross, knew tenderness in the pain. "But I say to you, love your enemies." Let us see how when the spirits of dominion and power are given reign, no victim falls alone. A crime against one love is a crime against all love. Let us have the strength to hold the many ways we are wounded by the crimes of ecological destruction and imperial control.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine Christ surrounded by the crowd... Imagine his body buckling under the strain...
Imagine him falling, collapsing to the ground... Does he fall slowly?... Is it sudden?... Does he make a noise?... What does the crowd do?...

Watch the fallen Jesus. What are his actions and movements... Does he try to rise?... Does he look defeated?... Does the crowd enjoy this?... How do the guards treat him?... Fill in the account of the gospel with your vision...

Do you see Christ, fallen in your world today?... Does Christ fall with you?... Does he fall for you?... Does he fall in the vacancy of rotting cities?... Does he fall in the desecration of stripped mountainsides?... Does he fall in the absurdity of violence?... Does he fall with cleared forests?... Has he fall in moments in your life?... Can we join him, or is he joining us?... Can we mourn with him, as he mourns with us?...

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Spend a while now in quiet prayer in the weakness of Christ...

Prayer

O God Who has mercy for every living being, remember to us our connection to them all. Shepherd us into right relationship with all our siblings, all-too-human and a-human and more-than-human. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Fourth Station Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Like a child comforted by its mother I will comfort you.
— Isaiah 66:13

Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the rising and falling of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own heart too.”

— Luke 24:34-35

Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering?

— Lamentations 1:12

Reflection

When we are in right relationship with God, the cry of our ecological community becomes our own cry: we call out with the same voice as the Earth. We can join, two millenia later, in the cries of Mary as she reaches for her son: we see the love of the Lord being crucified daily, and it grieves us. We see the weight of our sins stretching the net of God's love. We see the soil and the waters poisoned, and when we are awake in prayer to our Creator, we feel them yearning for healing. We yearn with them. Let us be witnesses, as Mary is, to the martyrdom of love. Let us wait for its return in truth.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine Mary pushing through the crowd... How does she look?... What is she wearing?... How does she move?... Does she call out?... Is she silent?... How do the people treat her?... Do they notice her?... Does anyone take stock of her grief?... Imagine her coming forward in the path Jesus, her son, takes to the spot of his execution... What is on her face?...

Do they embrace?... Do they exchange words?... How long do they have?... What do they say and do?...

What is the cry of Mary today?... Who are the afflicted mothers, the ones who see the loss of love in this world?... How does Christ meet them?... What would it mean to hear their cries?...

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Could we lift their voices?... What does the Mother of God wish for in our world?... What would it be to join in her witness to the death of her son?...

Spend a while now in quiet prayer in the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

God of Truth, bring us closer to the suffering of the world. Bring us closer to the suffering of Mary, Mother of God. Those who care for Jesus care for the wounded planet. There is care abounding for the places laid waste by human power. Let us share in this care, let us awaken to it and be moved by it. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Fifth Station Simon Helps Jesus Carry the Cross

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

“I tell you this truly, whatever you did to one of the least of these siblings of mine, you did to me.”
— Matthew 25:40

Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

— Mark 15:21

Reflection

A deep sense of communion for all the large and little creatures of our home planet cannot be made real if our hearts lack tenderness for and support from each other as humans, inextricably in community with each other. We do not carry the Cross alone. We are always already in this together, before we recognize it, and further than we can fully know.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine yourself among the crowd... Imagine Simon stepping forward... Do you know who he is?... Does he move with purpose or hesitancy?... What does he seem to be feeling?... What kind of a man is this?...

Imagine him taking the Cross with Jesus... How does Jesus respond?... Does he seem relieved?... Do they share a look?... A word?... How does the crowd respond?...

Who are the ones who step forward today?... Who do you know, human and nonhuman, that are the helpers of Christ?... How do they move?... Do they choose this path, or are they forced?... How does the world respond to them?... How do we respond?... Where are we in this story?... Where do we want to be?... How may we ask Christ to help us, that we may help build his community, his kingdom?...

Spend a while now in quiet prayer in the suffering of Christ and the world...

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Prayer

O God Who suffers with all, connect us to each other as kin in the web of Your creation. Let us see ourselves again in our fullness as family in one home. Let us remember that our Creator never abandons us, and even when we are driven apart, God is the Reconciler. There are no frontiers or barriers, social or political, economic or ecological, behind which You will allow us to hide. In the House of the Lord, there is no room for the globalization of indifference. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Questions

Can we be a Simon for another? Is there another who is a Simon to us? Why is it that sharing pain brings relief? What are the ways in which we are weighed down by indifference? How can we bring our indifference to God, our Creator and Sustainer? How can we search and ask for reconciliation – to each other and to all things?

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Sixth Station The Face of Jesus is Wiped By Veronica

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

They will see him face to face, and his name will be written on their foreheads.

— Revelation 22:4

Reflection

An anonymous woman wipes the face of Jesus with cloth, perhaps from her own head. Her act of compassion has a place in the history of our redemption. May we see that our own compassion is raised before the eyes of Jesus. May we have the strength to watch and be aware of how we grow in life as we act in compassion. Every gesture of love has its place in the redemption God brings.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine yourself among the crowd... Imagine Veronica moving forward... Does Jesus see her coming forward?... From where does she get the cloth... Is it her own veil?... How does she look at Christ?... What kind of a woman is this?...

Imagine her wiping the face of Jesus... How does Jesus respond?... Does he seem relieved?... Do they share a gaze?... A word?... Does Christ thank her?... How does the crowd respond?... What are the stains on the face of Christ?... What do we have to wipe them away with?... Are we ready?... Do we see Christ in our lives?... What are the simple acts by which we respond to love?... What does it mean to share love as Veronica did?... What does this story make you feel?...

Spend a while now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

God of the humble, and the forgotten, and the faceless, just as Veronica wiped the face of Jesus, help us to see the face of Your Son ever before us and in all things. May we touch Your boundless love with every gesture of compassion, and see that we are enough in Your eyes – we are enough, already enough. Our enoughness is the source of our strength. Our security in Your love gives us space to dare to act, however small, however haltingly, for You are with us. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Seventh Station Jesus Falls for a Second Time

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light.

— Matthew 11: 28-30

I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning. My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body. I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart. My friends and companions avoid me because of my wounds; my neighbors stay far away.

— Psalm 28:6-8, 11

Reflection

Already so much has fallen, and the passing is just beginning. Many more lives will be lost due to human sin. Our unjust systems exploit the weak through and through, and any hope seems naive. The might of these systems seems unbreakable, and it often feels too late: the Earth may already be irreversibly destroyed. What may have been a garden is perhaps to be a wasteland. Many ecological patterns that are essential to human life are already altered. Whatever is fragile – and communal life is always fragile – is threatened by the spirit of a deified market, which becomes a rule beyond question. There may be parts of our world we must be willing to watch collapse, to let go of. Perhaps our prayers should not only be for preservation, but for readiness to transform, and to go through the fall that transformation necessitates.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine the journey of Christ up to this point... Does he move with fatigue?... Does he move with assurance?... Does he seem afraid?... What makes him fall again?... How does he react?... How long does he stay down?... Who or what brings Jesus to his feet again?... Fill in the details of this scene...

What is the energy of the crowd at this point?... What does it feel like to be among them?... What does it feel like to watch this?... Do you want to look away?...

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What does it mean for Jesus to fall again?... What does it make you feel?... Are you tired?... How do you respond to this fatigue?... Is Jesus tired along with us?... What does it mean to share the fatigue of Christ as Christ shares our fatigue?...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

God, Who knows our guilt, give us the right spirit of lament for all the places and species that have already fallen and disappeared as a result of our sinfulness. Let us lament for the ones we have harmed: for the populations humanity has erased, for the homes we have taken. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You.

Eighth Station
Jesus Meets the Women of Jerusalem

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

— Luke 23: 27-28

Reflection

This encounter records the longest utterance of Jesus in any of the Gospel accounts of his passion. What does Christ do with his words? Where does he direct his strength? He delivers a prophetic warning in response to the sorrow of his followers. A call to turn to the ways of justice and compassion. A call for repentance. Christ basically says, as he is being dragged to his death, “We don’t have time for your tears – repent. Learn to live in a new way.” This episode feels quite harsh.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine the women of Jerusalem... Where do they come from?... How do they look?... How many of them are there?... How do they move together?... What does their grief look like?... What does it make you feel to hear and see them?... Where are you?... Are you among those who follow Jesus?... Are you among the women?...

See Jesus turning to them... How near are they to him?... Does he know all of them well?... They are all his followers, what is their connection?... Are some of these women friends of Christ?... Have some of them only just met him?... How does he look at them?... What is his expression?... What does he say?... What is his tone?... What does his voice sound like?... Does he speak loudly or softly?...

Focus especially on the words of Jesus... *Do not weep for me... Weep rather for yourselves...* Can we hear these words from Christ today?... From what mouths do they come?... From what bodies are these warnings spoken?... From what places?... What is the fate of these prophetic

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voices?... How does it compare to the fate of Jesus?... What does it mean to listen to these words?... What does it mean to hear them as a group, as a community?...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

Pilgrim God, God of the world to come: we weep for ourselves, we weep for the future, we weep for all the victims of political and ecological injustice. Give us connection to Your call, and give us the time to hear the words of Your prophets in this world. All harmonies between Creator and creation have been broken in the broken systems we set up: give us the strength to heal. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Questions

Where do we hear this prophetic warning in the world? Where do we hear it in ourselves? How does it feel to receive the words of Christ – a call to transformation and repentance? What does it mean to share in the messianic inheritance of our faith?

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Ninth Station Jesus Falls for the Third Time

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

**But now, now – it is Adonai who speaks – come back to me
with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning.**
— Joel 2:12

Reflection

Ecological conversion is the need of God's people in this time. This conversion is a conversion into wholeness. To be ecologically whole, we must be integrated into a living vision of our faith in the Lord. Our course needs to be changed, and our path needs to be renewed. Falling away and failure is an unavoidable part of the renewal that is ours in Christ. Down to our daily lives, every mundane moment, we are dependent and interconnected beings, and it is in these connections that we can feel our yearning for renewal, and find our hope.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine the journey of Christ up to this point... How does the crowd that follows him move?... How close are you to Jesus?...

Watch him fall for the third time... How does Jesus look, fallen again, under the weight of his Cross?... What is the shape of his body on the ground?... Is he trembling?... How is he breathing?... Where are his hands?... How long does it take for him to rise?...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

O God, Who is with the barren and the empty, help us repent of our self-enclosure and return to You. Grant us wisdom to understand our collective destiny. Guide us to replace our systemic imperatives of consumption with sacrifice, greed with sharing, wastefulness and indifference with awareness. Give us a vision of that asceticism which means to give, not just to give up. Give us the asceticism that is a way of loving, a way of moving from the fears of a disconnected self to the flourishing of all things. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Tenth Station Jesus is Stripped of His Clothes

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get.
— Mark 15:24

Reflection

Jesus is stripped to dehumanize him, to terrorize him, to provide an economic prize for his captors. Imagine the leering privilege of the captors. It does not succeed: even such absolute, humiliating, violating power succeeds only in dehumanizing itself. Nothing is so powerful as to separate us from our participation in Christ on the Cross. Nothing can strip us of the Covenant that we are born with and born into. Our bodies and our identities were forged in the love of God. Yet, despite our covenant promise, human powers are eradicating communal flourishing from the whole of the Earth, stripping creation of its dignity. Some of it is visible: burning forests, polluted seas and dried up rivers, infertile land, and dead animals. Some of it is less visible: bodies full of toxins left to clog the soil, invisible carcinogens in the water we drink and air we breathe, and microplastics in our bodies.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Jesus has finished his parade through the streets of Jerusalem... What is the space he is stopped in?... How do the people assemble?... How do the guards direct him?... How do they treat and move him?... How do they look at him?... How weak does Jesus look in comparison to these men with power and violence?... Is it easy to watch this happen?...

See Jesus being stripped of his clothes... How do the guards take his last belongings from him?... How does he look as his clothes are pulled from his body by his captors?... What is the noise of the crowd?... What is the feeling as you watch this?... See the guards gloating and discussing who gets what... See them dividing his clothes... How do they speak and move?... Are they affected by what they are doing?...

Where is Christ being stripped today?... Who are the ones, human and nonhuman, that are stripped of all they need, physical and more, in the way Christ was victimized?... What are the powers that do this?... Why do these powers take from those whom they victimize?... What do we have that is taken?... What have we taken from our neighbors, human and more-than-human?...

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Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

God Stripped Bare, God of the Naked, God of the Cold, God of the Fading Places, we lament our crimes. We lament the Crucifixion of Your Son in every corner of our world and every moment of our lives. Free us from our sin, and unite us as a messianic people, a people in pilgrimage to Your kingdom. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

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Eleventh Station Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

**He has wiped out the handwritten record of debts against us;
he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.**
— Colossians 2:14

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals – one on the right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

— Luke 23:23-24

Reflection

We are crucifying the hope and love of the Creator on the nails of systemic power. We are crucifying the body of Christ, a body which is to be our own, on the nails of a system that knows no care for the weak. In prayer, we can feel the pain of the One Who made us. Christ does not let us suffer alone: Christ chooses the Cross, for that is the Way of Love. We have the gift of choosing this Way also.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Jesus, stripped of all but his undergarments, is nailed to the Cross... The Cross is lifted, and set in the ground... We are with the suffering Christ... We are there as he suffers...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

O God, we know You to be love unceasing. We know You to be mercy without end. Make us clean, on Your Cross. Nail to Your Cross the whole body of evil in this world, the achings of our hearts, the distortions of our minds, the cruelty that lives in our bodies. Make us new as You share in the suffering and confusion of what we are. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Let us walk in contemplative silence as we move from each Station to the next: feel the holy intention and miracle of each step, how God breathes life into every move we make, and how the Earth supports our bodies without fail, a constant lover and companion. Listen to the wind, feel the movement of your own breath, and know all things are alive in Love.

Stations for Creation

Twelfth Station Jesus Dies Upon the Cross

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

He emptied Himself – taking on the form of the slave, and became as people are; and being as all people are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

— Philippians 2:7-8

Knowing that everything had been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

— John 19:28-30

Reflection

The Incarnate God is ever before us. This sight brings unspeakable newness to the eyes that behold it. I offer no reflection here, because words fail themselves before the life and death of the Incarnate God.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is dying on the Cross... How long has he been there?... How many are left among the crowd?... What is the feeling among those who watch?... Is there noise?... Are they silent?... What is the environment around them?... Are there birds in the sky?... Are there clouds?... Is the sun hot on your skin?...

See Christ speak to his captors... Hear him request a drink... What is the sound of his voice?... See his captors respond... Do they move as if with routine, or do they think about what they are doing?... How many others have died in this place, in this way?...

See Christ receive the sponge with his last drink... How does he drink it?... What is his expression?... How long does he receive this drink?... Is he silent before he speaks?... Hear the last words of Jesus... *It is finished...* What does this make you feel?... What does this mean to you?...

Stations for Creation

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

Holy One, receive our silence before the Cross of Your death. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Stations for Creation

Thirteenth Station Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Joseph of Arimathaea asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, and so they came and took it away.

— John 19:38

Reflection

Imagine the reality in the wake of Jesus' execution. Imagine those grieving: Mary, Mary Magdalene, and John. They lost a loved one because his life was feared and dismissed and derided by those in power. For his difference and weakness and love, his very existence itself became unacceptable to those with power. The hopes and dreams of his family and loved ones are gone. They are locked into the painful reality of his destruction.

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

See Joseph coming forward... See him ask Pilate to take down the body of Jesus... How does he ask?... How does Pilate respond?... How does Pilate seem to feel about the whole ordeal?... Is he glad it is over with?... Do you see any regret in him?... Is this a familiar routine for one in his position?... Has he seen this before with other "criminals"?...

See the Cross as it is lowered... What time of day is it now?... See the last of those who are here, grieving... See Mary, the mother of Jesus... See Mary Magdalene... See John the Apostle... Who else may be there?... How are each of them reacting?...

Who are those that grieve in this way today?... What are the places or people that you grieve?... What does it mean to grieve death as a follower of Jesus?... How does a community grieve?...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with the suffering of Christ and the world...

Prayer

Suffering Christ, Your story is a familiar one to us. We know of many lives that are crushed, carelessly, by systems that seek wealth and expansion through force and neglect. We know the billions of other creatures in our communities feel this loss. Open our hearts, Christ. Show us where the injustice is. The Earth is Yours and all that is in it – pour out upon us the power of Your love, that we may celebrate life and its beauty. Praise be to You!

Stations for Creation

Fourteenth Station Jesus is Placed in the Sepulcher

We adore You, Christ, and we praise You.
Because, by Your holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

So, Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock.

— Matthew 27:59-60

Reflection

What are our dreams? What are the dreams of the soil? What are the dreams of the many beings who live among and beneath us? Have these dreams vanished?

Practice

Quieten yourself now. Follow your breath, in and out, as an anchor to your awareness. The breath is the bridge of the spirit, between body and mind. Take a few breaths, opening your mind and connecting with your body. Imagine the scene.

Imagine the tomb of Christ... It was one made by Joseph for himself... Is it humble?... In what ways does it reflect the care with which it was made?...

How do those who grieve move around the body of Christ?... How do they speak to each other?... Do they speak?... What care can you see in their gestures?... What does it mean to love something, and lose it?... What are the things you have had to bury?... What are the things we would like to see given new life?... What does it mean to wait for this?... Can we wait together?...

Spend a moment now in quiet prayer with Christ...

Prayer

Loving God, we forget that the ultimate destiny of all things is in You, already attained in the risen Christ. We fail to see the deepest roots of our current failings. We want to bury the thought of our kinship with all other creatures. We want to forget what it means that we were all raised up in the Resurrected Jesus. Help us to see that Your vision is of a shifting, transforming web – that humanity and all our desires are only part of the truth. Help us to feel kinship with all our neighbors, that your Kingdom is the transcendent fullness of relationship, the living embrace of the risen Christ. Drawn by the fullness of Christ, call us out of the tomb of our own making and call all creatures back to togetherness in Your Kingdom.